

Dileep, Zamindars of Deotah and Samoh, and Muinuddin of Gurhee, who were the leaders of the plunderers. On this they ceased plundering for some time. But in spite of the promise, they, again attacked and plundered the remaining Muhallas.

Persons, from the villages along the roads, also committed highway robberies on the roads and the Zamindar of Lalpoor, took very prominent part in it. Towards Dadri, the people from the villages of Dadri, Chitehrah, Kutehrah, Bil, Kot, Til—Begumpur, Berpoorah, Nuzla, chamrao, Lahree, and Zaukahbad; towards Dankaur, of Furreedpur, Nizampoor, Cheetee, Jowlee, Deotah, Kerlee Rajpoor, and Bishwanath; towards Hapur, of Mandowrah, Kowarah, Kalaunda, Sepanee, Pempoor and the Rajpoots of Nuga Somanah, Passah, Kahundah, Chowlas etc; towards Kherja and Bulandshahr, of Cholah Lalpoor, Anedpoor, were the principal participants in robbing on the road.¹¹

Umrao Singh of Kateyrch was called Rajah of all the Goojurs about Dadri and was an officer of the rebels. Surjit Goojur, the ringleader in the plunder of Danpur, was officer of the Goojurs in the neighbourhood of Danpur.

The presence of Nawab Walidad Khan at Malagurh had completely paralysed the English about this time. In the interior of the district, order was now passing away. Former proprietors were trying to oust the present possessors of their estates.¹² In some instances it was effected by large bodies of armed men. But the principal Talooqdars all this time had remained quiet, except for Walidad Khan.

The Continuous stream of the revolutionary troops up the Grand Trunk Road had boosted the morals of the people and the sacking of the town of Secundrabad being permitted still to go on with impunity, had led the people to suppose that the English power had really ceased.

On June 11, 1857, Walidad Khan along with his soldiers attacked the English at Bulandshahr.¹³ A fierce battle was fought in which the English were defeated and they took to flight towards Meerut. Thus Bulandshahr passed into Walidad's Control and he established himself as the ambedar of the Delhi king, Bahadur Shah. He left no trace of the English in the district and also started the revenue administration.¹⁴

After capturing Bulandshahr, Walidad Khan sent the treasures found there, to the king at Delhi.¹⁵

On 18th June, a force under Major Thatcher came out from Meerut, with which Mr. Sapte, the district Magistrate of Bulandshahr and his party proceeded to Gulowtee, and drove out the rebel pickets and dispersed the followers Walidad Khan, who however again reoccupied the posts as soon as the English had retired.

The English at Meerut incited the local Jats against Walidad Khan.¹⁶ On June 20, 1857, accompanied by 2000 Jats they marched towards

cated for rebellion by the English in the district after the restoration of their Government.³²

Name	Date of confiscation	Remarks
1. Walidad Khan	15.10.1857	————
2. Hiseen Begum	—Do—	Wife of Walidad Khan.
3. Ahmad Khan	31.10.1857	Brother of Walidad Khan
4. Nawab Khan		" " " "
5. Ghulam Hyder Khan	15.10.1857	" " " "
6. Massahub Goojur	15.10.1857	Notorious Goojur. He took leading part in the plunder of Bulandshahr.
7. Isram	15.10.1857	Notorious Goojur
8. Mohendra Singh	—Do—	" "
9. Shahmat	12.10.1857	A Musalman villager.
10. Ghulam Ghaus	13.10.1857	He was a man of considerable influence and his village used to supply large number of recruits for the Irregular cavalry, who fought against English. His Estate was made over to Reo-Galab Singh of Koochesur.
11. Nahar	1.12.1857	Joined Walidad Khan. Property confiscated. Joined Bhim Singh of Ghoroutt who had set himself up as king and committed great atrocities. Property confiscated.
12. Balburdust		
13. Khan Mohammad		
14. Gul Mohammad		
15. Mukund Singh	6.11.1857	Rebellion. He was a Naib Resaldar of the 15th Irregular cavalry which murdered their commanding officer Col. Fisher.
16. Kalleh Khan		
17. Sandhir	6.11.1857	Properties were confiscated. They were involved in the Plunder of the town of Secundrabad.
18. Ram Dayal		
19. Ram Sookh		
20. Kuleen Singh		
21. Phool Singh		
22. Inderjeet Singh	17.10.1857	He gave a great deal of trouble and collected a large number of men against English.
23. Bursi Singh	17.10.1857	The inhabitants of his village joined the rebellion against the Government and fired on the police. Property confiscated.
24. Rahim Allah Khan	24.10.1857	Charged for rebellion. Openly rebelled and assisted Walidad Khan. His Estate was made over to one Fyez-ullah Khan.

Name	Date of confiscation	Remarks
25. Fuheemun-Nisa	—	Sister of Rahim Ullah Khan, suffered the same fate.
26. Umrao Bahadur	11.11.1857	Charged for rebellion for assisting Walidad Khan.
27. Khoobee Singh	15.11.1857	Charged for rebellion for supporting Walidad Khan.
28. Ikram Ali	24.11.1857	Charged for rebellion for joining Rahimullah Khan. His Estate was handed over to Luchman Singh.
29. Mohd. Hasan	24.11.1857	Charged for rebellion. Property confiscated.
30. Sita Ram	20.11.1857	Charged for rebellion. His property was handed over to Luchman Singh.
31. Wali Mohd.	24.11.1857	Charged for rebellion for joining Rahim Ali Khan. His estate was transferred to Luchman Singh.
32. Gholam Abbas	24.11.1857	Charged for rebellion. Property handed over to Luchman Singh
33. Lekhraj	27.10.1857	Charged for plunder. Goojurs, who had assisted Walidad Khan and plundered and murdered many travellers. Their villages were made over to the Jats of Bhatauna.
34. Salig		
35. Chioa Sahai		
36. Basti		
37. Daya Ram	27.10.1857	For open rebellion. He was a leader of the Goojurs.
38. Ram Sahai	27.10.1857	Charged for rebellion. She was the wife of Nawab H. Ali Khan of Delhi who had joined the rebels and was said to have since been hung.
39. Debi Singh		
40. Haji Begum		
41. Mansoor Khan	1.11.1857	Charged for rebellion. He was a Jamadar in 30 Irregular Cavalry and had joined Walidad Khan.
42. Moti Singh	9.7.1857	Charged for plunder
43. Shitab Khan	5.11.1857	Joined Walidad Khan.
44. Ranmust Khan	24.11.1856	Joined Walidad Khan
45. Kripa Ram	24.11.1857	Joined in plundering Bulandshahr and Government buildings.
46. Bumroodul-Nisa	22.12.1857	Charged for rebellion for being involved in the murder of Tahseeldar of Atrauli, Dist. Aligarh.

Name	Date of confiscation	Remarks
47. Balam	30.11.1857	Charged for rebellion.
48. Abdullah Khan	4.12.1857	For rebellion.
49. Sheo Kishan	5.11.1857	A villager on the banks of the Ganges. He was charged of plunder and rebellion.
50. Wazeer Ullah	20.10.1857	For joining Walidad Khan.
51. Mulluk Singh	23.7.1857	He had set himself up as king and was therefore hanged.
52. Bhop Singh	9.3.1858	For rebellion. The villagers of his village had given great trouble and many had taken service under Walidad.
53. Jubba Singh	24.11.1857	For rebellion and plunder.
54. Lalji)	9.7.1858	For open rebellion. They stopped the Dak between Bulandshahr and Shikarpur and had killed many.
55. Dooli)		
56. Mustafa Khan	17.7.1858	He was sentenced to 7 years imprisonment and confiscation of all property for writing Seditious letters to the King of Delhi.
57. Abdul Latif Khan	22.7.1858	For rebellion. He was sentenced to transportation for life beyond the sea and confiscation of all his property.
58. Ilahi Buksh }	23.1.1857	For rebellion. They were of the 4th Irregular cavalry and had joined the rebels and fought against English at Delhi.
59. Husain Buksh }		
60. Sadullah	4.7.1858	For joining Walidad Khan.

The above account clearly establishes the wide spread character of this revolt in the district, as it extended in the North-West upto Dadri, in the West upto Dankaur, in the North upto Gulawti and Bhatauna, in the North-East upto Kuchesar and Bhewan, in the East upto Khanpur, Ahar and Anupshahr, in the South-East upto Ramghat, in the South Khurja and in the Centre Bulandshahr, Malagurih and Secunderabad were its important centres.

Persons from all classes and professions Talooqdars, Zamindars, Militarymen, Burkundazes, peasants and others took part in the revolt.⁴⁶ They came from the towns as well as from the villages, and belonged to the different communities and castes.

The revolt in the district was defeated owing to the superior military strength¹⁷ of the English. Efforts to the reconquest by the English were made upto the last and hundreds died in the attempt. Finally the revolutionaries succumbed or reconciled themselves to the English rule finding it as a fait accompli and not due to any in shift loyalty. It is not really of great significance that certain sections or individuals sided with the English or took rewards due to their personal ambitions.

The developments also bring out the fact that there was lack of unity of purpose among the different Talooqdars and sections of the people. The Jats even supported the English and killed many muslims. Walidad Khan too did not make earnest attempts—to win popular support or that of other Taloodars in the district.

NOTES

- 1 Letter No. 406 of 1858, from P. Williams, Commissioner 1st Division, to Williams Muir, Secretary Government, N.W.P. ALLAHABAD, dated the 13th, November 1858—*Narrative of Events, N.W.P., Meerut Division*, pp. 50-54.
- 2 *Narrative of Events, N.W.P. Meerut Division*, pp. 50-54.
- 3 Op. Cit. William's letters—*Narrative*, pp. 50-54.
- 4 Deposition of Shivabans Rai, Wakil, before the Munsif of Secundrabad—Bulandshahr Collectorate Mutiny Basts; C.F. *Freedom struggle in U.P.* (ed. A.A. Rizvi) Vol. V, p. 10.
- 5 Op. Cit. William's letter—*Narrative*, pp. 50-54.
- 6 Op. Cit. William's letter—*Narrative*, pp. 50-54.
- 7 Letter from W. Muir to J. Muir, dated Agra, 2nd June 1857. — Muir, William Records of the Intelligence Deptt. c.f. *F.S. in U.P.* (ed. A.A. Rizvi) Vol. V, p. 40.
- 8 Bulandshahr collectorate Mutiny Basts; c.f. *F.S. in U.P.* (ed. Rizvi) Vol. V, pp. 44-49.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Op. cit. Bulandshahr Mutiny Basts; c.f. Rizvi, Vol. V, pp. 44-49.
- 11 Deposition of Shivabans Rai Wakil, before the Munsif of Secundrabad—Collectorate Mutiny Basts; C.F. *f.s. in U.P.*, Rizvi, Vol. V, p. 51.
- 12 *Narrative of Events, N.W.P., Meerut Division*, pp. 54-55.
- 13 Bulandshahr Collectorate Mutiny Basts, File No. 714, c.f. *F.S.* Vol. V, p. 55.
- 14 Bulandshahr collectorate Mutiny Basts; File No. 714; (c.f. *F.S. in U.P.* Vol. V, p. 55).
- 15 Ibid., *f.s.* Vol. V, p. 56.
- 16 Ibid., *f.s.* p. 59.
- 17 Muir, William: *Records of the Intelligence Deptt. Govt. of N.W.P., Mutiny of 1857*, Vol. I, pp. 67-68; C.F. *f.s. in U.P.* Vol. V, pp. 67-68.
- 18 Bulandshahr Collectorate Mutiny Basts, File No. 714 c.f. *F.S. in U.P.* Vol. V, p. 71.
- 19 Op. Cit. Mutiny Basts; File 714; *F.S.* Vol. V, p. 71.
- 20 *Narrative of Events, N.W.P. Meerut Division*, pp. 56-58.
- 21 Op. Cit. Muir, William: *Records Intelligence Deptt.* p. 163; c.f. *f.s.* Vol V, p. 118.
- 22 *Op. cit.* Muir, William. p. 215; *f.s.* Vol. V, p. 119.
- 23 Further papers (No. 8, in continuation of No. 6) relating to "The Insurrection in the East Indies, 1858. Enclosure 1 in No. 2 p. 32; c.f. *f.s. in U.P.* Vol. V, p. 121.
- 24 Bulandshahr collectorate Mutiny Basts No. 1. Judicial File - 1859; D.No. 4; General No. 8; c.f. *F.S. in U.P.* Vol. V, pp. 61-63.

THE REVOLT OF 1857 IN BULANDSHAHR DISTRICT

J. P. TEWARI, ALIGARH

Generally the works on the Indian revolt of 1857 confine themselves to the descriptions of what happened at the important centres of the revolt e.g. Meerut, Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Bareilly, Jhansi. They hardly mention, what happened during this revolt in the intervening regions and the districts. Meerut set the spark aglow and it was picked up in quick succession not only at the aforesaid important centres but at almost every other place in the N.W.P. and Oudh. A correct assessment of the nature and character of this revolt in the country or U.P. is not possible unless a detailed study and analysis of the developments of the revolt at the districts level is attempted.

In this paper therefore an account of the 1857 revolt in the district of Bulandshahr (strategically situated on Agra-Meerut road, flanked by the districts of Delhi, Meerut, Moradabad, Badaun and Aligarh) is given. While at Meerut, Delhi and many other places the revolt was initiated by the sepoys and the civilian groups followed suit, in Bulandshahr district it was initiated by the Goojurs,¹ who were motivated by the desire of plunder and took advantage of the weak position of the English in the district² and the neighbourhood and other sections came later. The existence of the company's government, depended on its military strength and its capacity to suppress any act of lawlessness and opposition to the Government. But once it was known that the sepoys, the protectors of the Government, had risen against the English and over-thrown their Government at Meerut and Delhi and found, that the English in the district were incapable to resist them [the Goojurs were emboldened to start plunder at Secundrabad (a town at a distance of about 8 miles from Bulandshahr on the Delhi Road) on May 12, 1857 and to its east on the road up to Dadri, the most turbulent part of the district, inhabited principally by the Goojurs.³ The Goojurs also commenced burning Dak bungalows and destroy the Telegraph. Mr. Turnbull, the joint Magistrate of Bulandshahr, along with few others and a detachment of the 7th Regiment Native Infantry, went to restore order and arrested 46 Goojurs as prisoners at Dalelgurh and Rampur and placed them in the jail at Bulandshahr.

By then, most of the Goojurs who were in the jails of various districts were released by the rebel Regiments, and returned to their homes. On seeing them, the villagers understood that every district jail had been broken and said, "Let us go and release our friends."⁴ Accordingly a large number of Goojur and Rajput zamindars along with their followers from several villages, Deotoli, Til, Wair, Bhoara etc. assembled

and attacked Bulandshahr on the evening of May 21, 1857. On their appearance at Bulandshahr in large numbers, the sepoy of the Irregular cavalry, who were brought to carry the treasure safely to Meerut, disobeyed their officers and started distributing the treasure among themselves.¹ The jail guard, on the first approach of the mob, opened the jail gate and allowed the prisoners to pass out. The Goojurs were soon joined by groups of people from the city and neighbouring villages. They destroyed and fired all the Government buildings and records. All property, private and public, was carried off or burnt. The city people and those of the neighbouring villages took a very active part in the work of demolition.² The English officers at the station, who were just seven in number, first tried to drive out the Goojurs, but being deserted by the native sepoy and finding their position precarious, ran away from the districts and took shelter at Meerut. Later the sepoy of the 9th N.I. took the Government treasure of Bulandshahr to Delhi.³

With reinforcements under Major Reid, from Meerut, the English came out and recaptured Bulandshahr on May 26, without much opposition. On the evening of 30th May, Maj. Reid, marched with the whole of his Regiment, to join General Wilson's forces at Ghaziabad. Due to the departure of this strong force out of the district, and lack of any real strength with the English, the Goojurs and the other rebellious elements became more active.

About this time (26th May 1857) Walidad Khan, Nawab of Malagurb, (place at a distance of about 4 miles from Bulandshahr) who was a near relation of the King of Delhi, had returned from Delhi, having been made Subedar of Bulandshahr and Aligarh by the King, to Malagurb, by way of Dadri and Secundrabad. He and the Goojurs of Dadri, and Bishun Singh, Bhagwant Singh, Umrao Singh etc. the Rajput zamindars meeting together, plotted to overthrow the English Government.⁴

About this time, the revolutionary sepoy from Aligarh and Bulandshahr had arrived at Secundrabad. They looted the Tahseel and the Treasury and destroyed the records.⁵

The Goojurs, and the Rajputs now became more determined to destroy and plunder Secundrabad. Combining together, in thousands they attacked Secundrabad on May 31, 1857, and looted from May 31 to 3rd June, one Mohalla after the other.¹⁰ They also killed many inhabitants in that process. The English authorities at Bulandshahr, were unable to send out any help to the inhabitants, who left the city in thousands and came flocking into Bulandshahr and its neighbouring villages.

The remaining people of the town decided to seek protection by offering money to the Goojurs of Nizampur, Cheete and Deoteh and

Malagarh, General Mohd. Ismail Khan with 3000 Ghazis (soldiers) and one piece of artillery was deputed by Walidad Khan to resist them. A serious skirmish ensued and at last the men of Ismail Khan were able to drive out the English and the Jats back. One Jat village was also put to fire.

After the overthrow of the Company's Government at Aligarh, the road between Meerut and Agra passed completely into the hands of the rebels. Malagarh became the resort of all the revolutionaries from far and near. At Aligarh and Khurja, representatives were deputed by Walidad Khan with the object of establishing a regular Government and collecting revenue, to be sent to Delhi.¹⁷ The fort of Malagarh was about 900 yards away from the road, which was guarded with guns. The whole line of the road and its vicinity was strictly watched by the revolutionaries and even a man could not pass without being intercepted. Therefore for the English, communication even by "Kasid" was effected with extreme difficulty. Various expeditions were planned against Walidad Khan, but from different causes, were never undertaken.

Walidad Khan sent his troops, under the command of Mohd. Ismail Khan to Bhitora on 5th July 1857 to take back the belonging of the wayfarers plundered by Jats. In this, his troops were defeated as the Jats were very strong and were helped by the English troops also. Walidad sent a request to the king of Delhi for reinforcements, finding his position precarious.

On August 17, 1857, the Jats attacked the Village of Nahanawo, which was inhabited by Shaikhs and Saiyids, at the time of the morning prayer and killed most of the men and their young and grownup sons. They also killed one or two women and their sucking babes.¹⁸ After the massacre, they took possession of all their moveable and immovable property and occupied their "garhi". The ladies went to Walidad Khan and asked for compensation and action, as the government of Doab had been entrusted to him.¹⁹ Similarly on August 18, 1857, the Jats raided the village of Razzaqpur, in the neighbourhood of Bhatona, killed some people and plundered away all that property. Walidad Khan expressed his inability to the king of Delhi for suppressing the Jats without the help of the Imperial troops. The king of Delhi sent on 23rd August 1857, the whole of the Jhansi Brigade, consisted of the 12th Native Infantry, the 14th Irregular Cavalry, and a 9-pounder Battery to Walidad's assistance.²⁰ But it was still not sufficient to meet the requirements of the situation.

On 25th September 1857 Mr. Sapte and his party joined Col. Greathed's Columns at Ghaziabad which consisted of 2 European Regiments—the 8th and 75th, 2 Punjab Infantry Regiments, 3 Punjab Cavalry

Regiments, the 9th Lancers, 18 guns, and 2 mortars, which had started from Delhi after its recapture by the English, to pursue the flying rebels, and attacked Bulandshahr. Walidad Khan had, besides his Malagurh levies, the whole Jhansi Brigade. There was a fierce battle on the morning of Sept. 28, 1857 for three hours, in which Walidad's troops were defeated.¹¹ The English captured the town and the supporters of Walidad Khan fled leaving behind 2 guns and large quantity of Magazine stores.

After this defeat, large part of Walidad's troops got scattered. With a portion of his troops, he reached Malagarh but soon evacuated his fort and fled across the Ganges along with his followers, leaving a number of guns, stores and other things in the fort, which the English occupied in the night of 28th Sept.

Walidad Khan, after crossing the Ganges, was appointed Chuck-ladar of Islamnagar in Badaun district and continued to harass the English from the opposite side of the river with a large force.¹² Mr Sapta took his position at Ramghat, against the probable attack from the side of Walidad Khan. English remained under constant pressure for many more months from the revolutionaries, who kept firing on the English position every day, opposite Anupshahr. They were all up and down the river under the command of Gulzar Ali, the rebel Syed of Amroha, appointed a general by Khan Bahadur of Bareilly.¹³

During the absence of the English from the district, some other feudal chiefs had also tried to assert their independence. Inayat Ullah Khan, son of Abdul Qadar Khan, Rais of Chandera, had sent a petition to the king of Delhi, on July 10, 1857, for being granted Royal order, authorising him to restore order and tranquillity in Secunderabad. He repeated his request in another petition on August 4, 1857. His grandfather Nawab Naseeruddaula Mohd. Namdar Khan was Magistrate of this 'Zilla' on the part of the former king of Delhi. On this the king at Delhi, restored Inayat Ullah Khan, the title of Naseeruddaula held by his grandfather and authorised him to restore order.¹⁴

The Rani of Anupshahr, sent a petition to the king of Delhi, dated 26th August 1857, requesting for the grant of 'Farman' for the administration of that area to her. She also took possession of Raja Pratap Chandra Singh's estates in the Bulandshahr district and proclaimed her independence.¹⁵

Abdul Latif Khan, Rais of Khanpur, defied English government orders for paying his revenue dues. He was also alleged to keep mutinous troops under his service.¹⁶ But in the beginning of the revolt, he had been a English supporter.

Some other prominent Talloqdars, notably Rao Gulab Singh of Kochesar, Mohd. Ali Khan of Chatari, Murad Ali Khan of Pahasoo and Lachman Singh of Sikarpur, had also been the English supporters in the beginning as well as after the revolt, in the district.²⁷

On reoccupying Bulandshahr, Mr. Sapte lost no time in reestablishing the police posts and strengthening those which were necessary. The greater part of the Burkundazes (Thana Sepoys) had deserted and joined the rebels.²⁸ Mr. Sapte filled up their places mostly from the Jats.

Having set everything going in the station Mr. Sapte went via Syannah to Pooth and thence down the right bank of the Ganges, visiting each Ghat. He collected all the boats at Anoopshahr, and posted a body of 200 Jats. The Ghats of Pooth, Bussi, Ahar, between Gurhmukteshwar and Anoopshahr were placed under the charge of Rao Goolab Singh of Kochesar. From Anoopshahr they followed the course of the river to Ramghat, securing every boat of which they could find any trace.

On the arrival of Col. Seaton's Columns, Mr. Sapte and others marched up the bank of the river from Kuchla Ghat. They continued marching up the river bank, visiting each Ghat and destroying the boat at Dinapur, about 8 miles below Ramghat. They returned to Bulandshahr on 29th December 1857, after remaining out of the district for a fortnight.²⁹

On 2nd January, it was reported that a large body of the rebels had arrived at Chaupoor, opposite Anoopshahr, which they were threatening. Mr. Lyall started off with a body of mounted police, and arrived just in time to see the conclusion of a very smart affair, between the rebels and the Jats, in which the rebels were driven out.

On January 17, the rebels again came down in much greater force than before. They also had six guns with them. A fierce gun fight ensued in which they were defeated and driven.³⁰

The Goojurn had mostly deserted their villages and taken to the rivines of the Jamuna. The English had not been able to take any action against them so far. Mr. Sapte left the district on his transfer to Meerut on 21st April, 1858, and by that time the district had resumed its quiet. The revenue had been all paid in, several leaders of the revolt and other participants had been tried and awarded varying punishments—death, transportation for life, other rigorous imprisonments and confiscation of property, while those who had supported the English in any form were rewarded.³¹

Following were the prominent persons, whose estates were confis-

The overthrow of the Company's rule from the district and the establishment of an alternative government by Walidad Khan on behalf of the king of Delhi, suggests that to assume that the uprising of 1857, as a sepoy Mutiny⁴⁴ or merely consisted of general lawlessness and plunder may well be revised. There were conscious elements in it, seeking Independence from the foreign yoke. Once Walidad Khan established himself as the Subedar of the Delhi king at Bulandshahr, most of the Talloqdars, Zamindars and general people of different communities, castes, professions and groups, except the Jats of the bordering paragraph of Meerut and that too on being incited by the English accepted him as the lawful authority of the district and abided by his authority. Even the turbulent Goojurs and Rajputs ceased their acts of plunder against the local people and joined hands with him. Walidad Khan sent the Government treasure and the revenue collected to the king at Delhi and discharged his duties in the name of the king. All these facts bring out the presence of national elements in the character of the revolt. Dr. S. N. Sen at one place recognises that "in estimating the popularity of the movement of 1857, we must not forget that only a determined minority takes an active part in a revolt or a revolution while the overwhelming majority remains passive, and an interested section might openly align itself with the existing order. Nowhere did a revolt command universal support. So long as a substantial majority sympathises with the main object of a movement, it can claim a National status, though universal active support may be wanting. The mutiny became a revolt and assumed a political character when the mutineers of Meerut placed themselves under the king of Delhi and a section of the landed aristocracy and civil population declared in his favour. What began as a fight for religion ended as a war of independence for there is not the slightest doubt that the rebels wanted to get rid of the alien government and restore the old order of which the king of Delhi was the rightful representative.⁴⁵" In our view, actions of the rebels at Bulandshahr meet the criteria set by Dr. Sen and we are justified in calling them, with all their failings, partisans of the cause of Independence.

There is no doubt that the acts of plunder, devastation and killing by the Goojurs and the Rajputs were not conducive to the struggle for independence. But at the same time these acts can also not obscure the efforts of the king of Delhi, Walidad Khan, his men, Sepoys of the 9th. N.I. and Irregular Cavalry, Burkundazes, Jhansi Regiment, and of many others from the general people⁴⁶ and the feudal classes who endeavoured to maintain the independence of Bulandshahr. The hero of the revolt in the district were not the plunderers but Walidad Khan who represented the national forces in the Rebellion in the symbolic and actual loyalty he proclaimed and practised towards the king.

- 25 *The Hindu Patriot*; September 9, 1856, p. 202; National Library, Calcutta, c.f. F.S. in U.P. Vol. V, p. 74.
- 26 Bulandshahr Mutiny Batta; No. 7, File No. 369; C.f. F.S. U.P. Vol. V, p. 116.
- 27 *Narrative of Events, N.W.P.; Meerut Division*, p. 51.
- 28 *Ibid.*, pp. 58-61.
- 29 *Ibid.*
- 30 *Narrative of Events, N.W.P., Meerut Division*, pp. 58-62.
- 31 *Ibid.*
- 32 Post-Mutiny—Meerut Com. Deptt. No. XII Special File No. 11/1858. Zila Bulandshahr—State Archives, Allahabad.
- 33 Post-Mutiny—Meerut Com. Deptt. No. XII; Special File No. 11/1858. Zila Bulandshahr—State Archives, Allahabad.
- 34 Majumdar, R.C. : *Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857*.
- 35 Sen, S.N. *Eighteen fifty seven*; p. 411.
- 36 Op. cit. Post-Mutiny—Meerut Com. State Archives Allahabad.
- 37 Foreign Political Proceedings, 30th Dec. 1859, Part II; S. No. 1491; cons. No. 313. National Archives, New Delhi c.f. F.S. in U.P. Vol V, p. 122.

THE PINDARIS AND THE REVOLT OF 1857

TARASANKAR BANERJEE,
VISVA-BHARATI UNIVERSITY

The Pindaris had left a tale of horror and bloodshed in the history of India in the 19th century. These lawless, rapacious free booters belonging to no particular state, race and religion, virtually created a reign of terror in Central, Western and Southern India in the 1st quarter of the 19th century. Born in the general confusion and degeneration of the late 17th century, they rose to power and strength in the closing years of the 18th century. At first they formed a necessary appendage to the Maratha army and played a vital role in the supply of provisions to the Maratha soldiers in the battlefield. They generally came in the wake of a Maratha invasion and looted and plundered the civilian population. They got a part of the booty thus secured, by which they maintained themselves. So long as the Maratha power was strong enough to control these bands of marauders, they could not assume a menacing role. But since the Maratha debacle in the battle of Panipat, 1761, they gradually freed themselves from the effective control of the Marathas. Once that fetter was gone, they converted loot and plunder into a regular organised system and became a scourge to the peace loving common folk of the country.

The Pindaris did not confine their ravages to the native states; but carried on deep inroads in the East India Company's territories. Moreover, in the first two decades of the 19th century, British Imperialism in India stood face to face with Maratha ambition to dominate over the Indian subcontinent. The Pindari menace added to the gravity of the